

To the Environment Committee:

My name is Sidney F. Van Zandt and I live at 3 Front St., P.O. Box 9173, Groton, CT 06340. March 11, 2016

I wish to support HB 5585

This bill would establish a state parks sustainability account for the maintenance and operation of State Parks and fund such account through the diversion of certain funds from unclaimed bottle deposit funds and the Citizen's Election program.

The DEEP has responsibility for maintaining all of Ct State Parks. The organization that I helped found called the Groton Open Space Association in 1967 to Save The Haley Farm raised the town's portion of the Open Space purchase with the help of the CT Forest and Park Association. That was in 1970. However as there had been no maintenance, the fields had been reverting. In 1985 we, GOSA, has raised the funds to hire a farmer to cut those fields every year (the 2016 cutting will be happening this month). Funds provided by the state have not been anywhere near enough to do the maintenance on our many parks. These parks bring in a huge amount of revenue to each town. For instance in 2014 over 400,000 people visited Haley Farm and Bluff Point last year. What a huge economic gain for all our towns.

Thank you,

Sidney F. Van Zandt